

News from HIPAA & Medicaid

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR THE BILLING STAFFS OF HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS:

HIPAA'S "MORNING AFTER" – THINGS WENT SMOOTHLY, WITH MANY PROVIDERS AND SUBMITTERS STILL ON OLD SYSTEMS!

OLYMPIA, Wash. – The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) deadline on Thursday passed quietly – with “a trickle of problems, not a tidal wave,” as one observer put it.

Medicaid's contact with doctors, dentists, hospitals, and pharmacists on Thursday showed no major problems despite some isolated frustrations. HIPAA hot lines did experience increased call volumes, as much as 25 percent up in the case of the Affiliated Computer Services (ACS) call center (*best hours to call: late afternoon*). ACS, Medicaid's HIPAA vendor, said many of the calls were routine and dealt with enrollment issues or WINASAP2003 technical questions.

**MAA-HIPAA
Bulletin No. 9
October 17, 2003**

THE STATS: The first 270 eligibility inquiries came in early Thursday morning, and MAA spent the day switching batches of providers from “test” to “production” status. The Provider Unit call center reported normal volumes, but at least 60 providers called MAA for clarification of a flyer inserted in this week's reimbursement warrants. Most came from providers still filing with old systems, wondering if HIPAA would change the way they file claims. The answer: Not yet. But HIPAA ultimately will require compliance, so providers should be thinking ahead. And the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) say providers should be documenting their good-faith efforts to comply with the law.

PHARMACY POS: Not surprisingly, pharmacists rode the crest of the changeover at MAA, reflecting the fact that the pharmacy side of health care has been far ahead of other providers in computer applications. More than 47 percent of the pharmacy claims filed Thursday passed through the 5.1 POS system. But the first 5.1 claim was actually paid a day earlier – when the POS changes were quietly activated. (New Mexico, another state that switched its POS system over on Thursday, reported 41 percent compliance in its first day.)

BACKSTOPS: Part of the Coordination of Benefits Section in MAA issued staff members “stress-reducing rubber balls” on Thursday, hoping to cushion some of the aggravation of switching over to the new system. But the changes were not as traumatic as some feared. “I think that it will be more of a gradual transition,” said Supervisor **Carmen Gigstead**. “And in many ways, I think that's a good thing. It gives us time to adjust.” And the stress-reducing balls, which could be dribbled at the end of a rubber band, were a crowd pleaser.

Reminders for providers:

- ▶ You or your clearinghouse need to visit <http://maa.dshs.wa.gov> to switch status from test to production when you begin filing electronic HIPAA-compliant claims. POS billers are exempt from this notification. (See item on Page 2.)
- ▶ Providers interested in the 270/271 transaction need to be enrolled first with ACS.
- ▶ Updated WINASAP software is available from ACS. Remember to back your system up first, and call the ACS help desk with questions.
- ▶ If possible, time your calls to the ACS help desk in the late afternoon.
- ▶ **That number is 1-800-833-2051**

GOOD CATCH: HIPAA's changes proved themselves in another way on Thursday. **John Anderson**, the Assistant Project Manager, tried to use Web Portal functionality under a phony provider identification, but the HIPAA-sensitive computers shut John down. "It was a little annoying, but it was what should have happened," Anderson said. "The Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) realized that the identification was phony and rejected our tests." It took hours to reconstruct a new test-provider identification that the system would buy, but by mid-afternoon, Anderson was back on the system. "It was a good test for us," he said. "Security was working the way it is supposed to."

ANOTHER REMINDER: Providers who are ready to file HIPAA-compliant claims or their clearinghouses **MUST** go to Medicaid's HIPAA Web site and switch their status from "test" to "production." Medicaid is requiring this proactive declaration in order to rule out the possibility of mistaking test claims for real ones. This applies to all three major kinds of claim formats: 837p (physician/professional); 837i (institutional/hospital); and 837d (dental).

NOTE: This notice only applies to providers filing HIPAA-compliant electronic claims. Providers using their old system to file claims (including paper claims) are not affected. The test-production registration also does not affect pharmacists and their claims filed through either the 3.2 or 5.1 POS systems.

DUAL SUPPORT: Washington State has modified its current Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) computers to handle the new HIPAA-compliant claims. But Medicaid is not turning off its current claims-handling process, so Washington providers will have a backup if their HIPAA claims run into difficulty. MAA also advises against reverting to paper claims, because the processing takes longer and will delay everyone's claims reimbursements.

HIPAA HELP (Save these contacts):

- **Affiliated Computer Services (ACS)** hot line for technical testing questions on software or ACS EDI GATEWAY SERVICES: [1-800-833-2051](tel:1-800-833-2051)
- **DSHS HIPAA Web site** for free software and HIPAA-compliance information:
<http://maa.dshs.wa.gov/dshshipaa>
- **Federal HIPAA compliance site**, with practical advice for providers and the answers to frequently-asked questions (FAQ): <http://www.cms.gov/hipaa>
- **Executive summary of MAA's HIPAA compliance plan:**
http://maa.dshs.wa.gov/dshshipaa/attachments/pdf/HIPAAExecSummary_012804.pdf
- **ACS EDI Gateway, Inc.:** http://www.acs-gcro.com/Medicaid_Accounts/medicaid_accounts.htm
- **POS:** Email provider.relations@acs-inc.com or call 1-800-365-4944 to get in contact with customer service representatives and set up testing. Information is also available on the ACS Web site at: <http://www.acspbmhipaa.com>
- **SPECIAL POS SUPPORT:** Randy Stamp (randy.stamp@acs-inc.com)

HUMAN CONTACT:

Chris Johnson, HIPAA Contingency Planning, 360-725-1239

Bob Burlingame, HIPAA Provider Testing, 360-725-1256

Becky Boutilier, HIPAA Communications Manager, 360-725-2129 (boutibm@dshs.wa.gov)

Jim Stevenson, MAA Communications Director, 360-725-1915 (stevejh2@dshs.wa.gov)

Send email questions to hipaacomunications@dshs.wa.gov

HELP A COLLEAGUE:

COPY THIS BULLETIN AND PASS IT ON TO OTHER WASHINGTON STATE PROVIDERS, BILLING OFFICES OR CLINICS

Subscribe to these bulletins by e-mail: Send your e-mail address to stevejh2@dshs.wa.gov